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THE  
**MIRACLE**  
AND OTHER  
POEMS

BY  
**VIRNA SHEARD**

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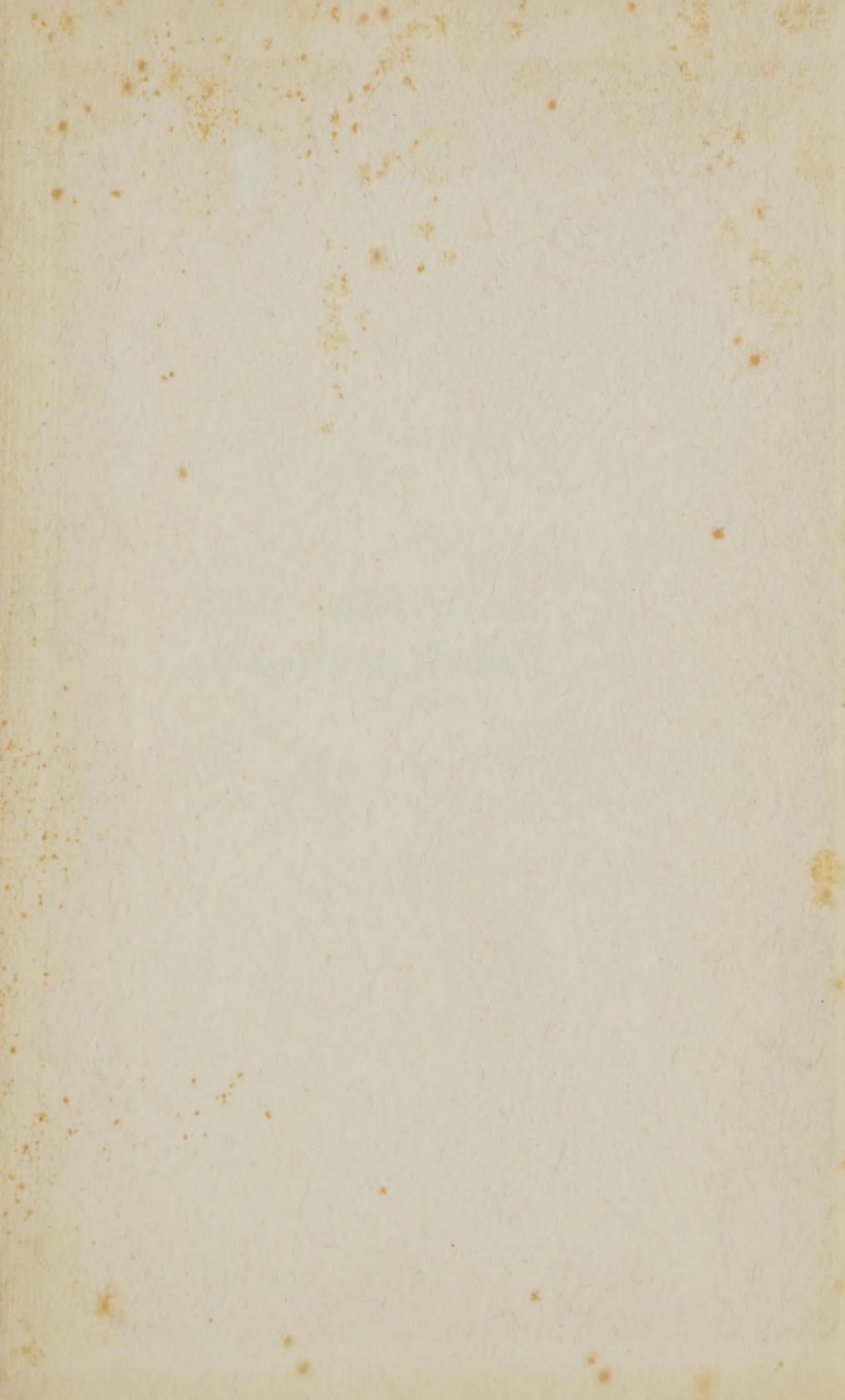
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THE MIRACLE  
AND OTHER POEMS

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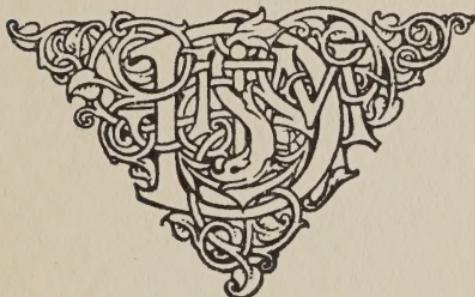


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THE MIRACLE  
AND OTHER POEMS  
BY VIRNA SHEARD ✓



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TO MY DEAR BROTHER

ELDRIDGE STANTON (JUNIOR)

WHO DIED BRAVELY AT NIAGARA, ON THE AFTERNOON OF  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4TH, 1912.

No tears for thee, no tears, or sighs,  
Or breaking heart—  
But smiles, that thou so well that bitter hour  
Didst play thy part!

VIRNA SHEARD.



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# THE MIRACLE AND OTHER POEMS

## THE MIRACLE

Up from the templed city of the Jews,  
The road ran straight and white  
To Jericho, the City of the Palms,  
The City of Delight.

Down that still road from far Judean hills  
The shepherds drove their sheep  
At silver dawn—at stirring of the birds—  
When men were all asleep.

Full many went that weary way at noon,  
Or rested by the trees,  
Romans and slaves, Gentiles and bearded priests,  
Sinners and Pharisees.

But when the pink clouds drifted far and high,  
Like rose leaves blowing past,  
When in the west where one star blessed the sky  
The gates of day shut fast.

All travellers journeyed home, and the moon-light  
Washed the road fresh and sweet,  
Until it seemed a gleaming ivory path,  
Waiting for royal feet.

. . . . .

Now it was noon, and life at its full tide  
Rolled ever to and fro,  
A restless sea, between Jerusalem  
And white-walled Jericho.

Blind Bartimeus, by the highway side,  
Sat begging 'neath the trees,  
And heard the world go by, Gentiles and Jews,  
Sinners and Pharisees.

Blind Bartimeus of the mask-like face,  
And patient, outstretched hand—  
He upon whom his God had set a mark  
- No man might understand;

Blind Bartimeus of the lonely dark,  
Who knew no thing called fear,  
But dreamt his dreams, and heard the little  
sounds  
No man but he could hear.

He heard the beating of the bird's soft wings  
Uprising through the air;  
He heard the camel's footfall in the dust,  
And knew who travelled there.

He heard the lizard when it moved at noon  
On the grey, sunlit wall;  
He heard the far-off temple bells, what time  
He felt the shadows fall.

Now, in the golden hour, he stooped to hear  
A muffled sound and low,  
The tramping of a myriad sandalled feet  
That came from Jericho.

Then on the road a little lad he knew  
Ran past, with eager cry,  
"Ho, Bartimeus! Give thine heart good cheer,  
For David's Son comes by!"

"He comes! He comes! And, sad one, who can  
say  
What He may do for thee?  
He makes the lame to walk! He heals the sick!  
He makes the blind to see!"

"He makes the blind to see! Oh, God of Hosts,  
Beyond the sky called blue,

What if Messiah cometh to His own!

What if the words be true!"

On his swift way the little herald sped,

Like bird upon the wing,

And left the lean, brown beggar—world-forgot—

Waiting for Israel's King.

But when the dust came whirling to his feet—

When the mad throng drew near—

Blind Bartimeus rose, and from his lips

A cry rang loud and clear—

The cry of all the ages, of each soul

In sad captivity;

The endless cry from depths of bitter woe—

"Have mercy upon me!"

What though the wild oncoming multitude

Jested and bade him cease;

What though the Scribes and mighty Pharisees

Told him to keep his peace;

What though his heart grew faint, and all the  
strength

Slipped from each trembling limb—

The One of all the earth his soul desired

Stood still—and spoke to him.

Then silence fell, while the upheaving throng,  
As sea-waves backward curled,  
Left a great path, and down the path there shone  
The Light of all the world.

The Light from whose mysterious golden depths  
The Sun rose in his might—  
The light from whose white, hidden fires were lit  
The torches of the night;

The Light that shining on a thing of clay  
Giveth it Life and Will:  
The Light that with an unknown power can blast  
And bid all life be still;

The Light that calls a ray of its own light  
A man's undying soul—  
The Light that lifts the broken lives of earth,  
Touches and makes them whole.

Up towards the Radiance Bartimeus went,  
Alone, and poor, and blind—  
Feeling his way, if haply it led on  
To One he fain would find.

Then spoke the Voice again. Oh, mystic words  
Of a compelling grace:

The curtain rose from off his darkened sight—  
He saw the King's own face.

So strangely beautiful—so strangely near—  
He worshipped with his eyes,  
Unheeding that for him at last there shone  
The sunlit noonday skies.

What though the clamouring crowd echoed his  
name  
Unto its utmost rim,  
He only saw the Christ—and in the light  
He rose and followed Him.

• • • • •  
Oh, Bartimeus of the mask-like face,  
And patient, outstretched hand,  
Was it for this God set on thee the mark  
No man might understand?

## THE CROW

HAIL, little herald!—Art thou then returning  
From summer lands, this wild and wind-torn  
day?

Hast brought the word for which our hearts  
are yearning,

That spring is on the way?

Hark! Now there comes a clear, insistent  
calling,

From hill tops crested with untarnished snow;

The trumpet notes are drifting—floating—  
falling—

Whene'er the breezes blow!

“Winter is over, and the spring is coming!”

Glad is thy message, little page in black—

“Winter is over, and the spring is coming—  
The spring is coming back!”

Tell me, O prophet, bird of sombre feather,  
Who taught thee all the mysteries of spring?—  
Didst note each passing mood of wind and  
weather,  
While flying to the North on buoyant wing?

Or didst thou rest upon the bare brown  
branches

And hear the sap go singing through the trees?—  
Didst watch with keen, far-seeing down-  
ward glances,

The leaves unlock their cells with fairy keys?

What though thy voice hath not a trace of  
sweetness

It thrills one through and through,  
With promises of joy in all completeness  
What time the skies are blue.

When robins from the apple-trees are flinging  
Out on the air their silver shower of song,—  
In lilac days, when children run a-singing,  
No single thought shall do thy memory wrong.

“Winter is over and the spring is coming!”

Sweet are thy tidings, little page in black—

“Winter is over and the spring is coming—  
The spring is coming back!”

## WHEN APRIL COMES!

WHEN April comes with softly shining eyes,  
And daffodils bound in her wind-blown hair,  
Oh, she will coax all clouds from out the skies,  
And every day will bring some sweet surprise,—  
The swallows will come swinging through the air  
When April comes!

When April comes with tender smile and tear,  
Dear dandelions will gild the common ways,  
And at the break of morning we will hear  
The piping of the robins crystal clear—  
While bobolinks will whistle through the days,  
When April comes!

When April comes, the world so wise and old,  
Will half forget that it is worn and grey;  
Winter will seem but as a tale long told—  
Its bitter winds with all its frost and cold  
Will be the by-gone things of yesterday,  
When April comes!

## KISMET

LOVE came to her unsought,  
Love served her many ways,  
And patiently Love followed her  
Throughout the nights and days.

Love spent his life for her  
And hid his tears and sighs;  
He bartered all his soul for her,  
With tender pleading eyes.

Her scarlet mouth that smiled,  
Mocked lightly at his woe,  
And while she would not bid him stay  
She did not bid him go.

But hope within him failed  
Until he pled no more—  
And cold and still he turned his face  
Away from her heart's door.

Long were the days she watched  
For one who never came;—  
Through sleepless nights her white lips bore  
The burden of a name.

### A SONG OF SUMMER DAYS

As pearls slip off a silken string and fall into the sea,

These rounded summer days fall back into eternity.

Into the deep from whence they came; into the mystery—

At set of sun each one slips back as pearls into the sea.

They are so sweet—so warm and sweet—Love fain would hold them fast:

He weeps when through his finger tips they slip away at last.

## AT THE PLAY

Just above the boxes and where the high lights  
fall

Looketh down a carven face from out the gilded  
wall.

Van Dyke beard and broidered ruff silently  
confess

That he lived—and loved perchance—in days  
of Good Queen Bess.

(Laces fine and linen sheer, curled and perfumed  
hair

Well became those gentlemen of gay, insouciant  
air.)

See! He gazeth evermore at the stage below;  
Noteth well the players as they quickly come  
and go;

Queens and kings and maidens fair, motley  
fools and friars,

Lords and ladies, stately dames, mounted  
knights and squires.

Well he knoweth all of them, all the grave and gay,  
These are they he dreamt of in the far and far  
away;

Saints and sinners, see they come down the  
bygone years,  
And the world still shares with them its laughter  
and its tears.

Still we haunt the greenwood for love of  
Rosalind,

Still we hear the jester's bells ajingle on the wind,  
Still the frenzied Moor we fear—Ah! and even  
yet

Breathless wait before the tomb of all the  
Capulet.

Though the slow years pass away, yet on land  
and sea,

Follow we the Danish Prince in sad soliloquy;  
And I fancy sometimes when the round moon  
saileth high

Yet in Venice meet the Jew—as he goeth by.

(Just above the boxes and where the high lights  
fall

Looketh down a carven face from out the gilded  
wall.)

## CHRISTMAS

WITH all the little children, far and near,  
God wot! to-day we'll sing a song of cheer!  
To rosy lips and eyes, that know not guile,  
We one and all will give back smile for smile;  
And for the sake of all the small and gay  
We will be children also for to-day.

Holly we'll hang, with mistletoe above!  
God wot! to-day we'll sing a song of love!  
And we will trip on merry heel and toe  
With all the fair who lightly come and go;  
We will deny the years that lie behind  
And say that age is only in the mind.

And to the needy, in whatever place,  
God wot! to-day we'll lend a hand of grace;  
For where is he who hath not need himself,  
Although he dine on silver or on delf?  
And we who pass and nod this Christmas Day  
May never meet again on life's highway.

But when the lights are lit, and day has flown—  
God wot! there will be some who sit alone;  
Who sit and gaze into the embers' glow,  
And watch strange things that flitter to and fro—  
The ghosts of dreams; and faces—long unseen;  
Shadows of shadows—things that once have been.

## THE HEART COURAGEOUS

Who hath a heart courageous  
Will fight with right good cheer;  
For well may he his foes out-face  
Who owns no foe called Fear!

Who hath a heart courageous  
Will fight as knight of old  
For that which he doth count his own—  
Against the world to hold.

Who hath a heart courageous  
Will fight both night and day,  
Against the Host Invisible—  
That holds his soul at bay.

Who hath a heart courageous  
Rests with tranquillity,  
For Time he counts not as his foe,  
Nor Death his enemy.

## A SONG

Love maketh its own summer time,  
'Tis June, Love, when we are together,  
And little I care for the frost in the air,  
For the heart makes its own summer weather.

Love maketh its own winter time,  
And though the hills blossom with heather,  
If you are not near, 'tis December, my dear,  
For the heart makes its own winter weather.

## THE CALL

Across the dusty, foot-worn street  
Unblessed of flower or tree,  
Faint and far-off—there ever sounds  
The calling of the sea.

From out the quiet of the hills,  
Where purple shadows lie,  
The pine trees murmur, “Come and rest  
And let the world go by.”

The west wind whispers all night long  
“Oh, journey forth afar  
To the green and pleasant places  
Where little rivers are!”

And the soft and silken rustling  
Of bending yellow wheat  
Says, “See the harvest moon—that dims  
The arc-lights of the street.”

Though the city holds thee captive  
By trick, and wile, and lure,

Out yonder lies the loveliness  
Of things that shall endure.

The river road is wide and fair,  
The prairie-path is free,  
And still the old earth waits to give  
Her strength and joy to thee.

## THE KNIGHT-ERRANT

Keen in his blood ran the old mad desire  
To right the world's wrongs and champion  
truth;

Deep in his eyes shone a heaven-lit fire,  
And royal and radiant day-dreams of youth!

Gracious was he to both beggar and stranger,  
And for a rose tossed from fair finger-tips  
He would have ridden hard-pressed through all  
danger,

The rose on his heart and a song on his lips!

All the king's foes he counted his foemen;  
His not to say that a cause could be lost;  
Spirits like his faced the enemies' bowmen  
On long vanished fields—nor counted the cost.

Wide was his out-look and far was his vision;  
Soul-fretting trifles he sent down the wind;  
Small griefs gained only his cheerful derision,—  
God's weather always was fair to his mind.

But he would comfort a child who was crying,  
Knightly his deed to all such in distress;  
Never a beast by the road-side lay dying  
He did not stoop to with gentle caress.

And by the old, and the sad, and the broken,  
Often he lingered, a well-beloved guest;  
Dear was his voice, whate'er the word spoken,  
Sweetening their day with a song or a jest.

In the far times of brave ballad and story,  
Men of his make kept the gates of the sea,  
Wrought mighty deeds of power and glory,  
Scattered their tyrants, and set the land free!

In the far times when perchance hearts were  
stronger,  
When for a faith men could face death alone,  
And it would seem that love lasted longer,  
Such a white soul would have come to its own.

• • • • •

Down in the city the people but noted  
One who was silent when things went awry,  
Toiled at dull tasks, and was strangely devoted  
To small deeds of kindness that others passed  
by.

Down in the city the people but noted  
One who thought little of wealth and its ways;  
One whose true words were full often misquoted,  
One who laughed lightly at blame or at praise.

## A SOUTHERN LULLABY

LITTLE honey baby, shet yo' eyes up tight;—  
(Shadow-man is comin' from de moon!)—  
You's as sweet as roses if dey *is* so pink an white;  
(Shadow-man 'll get here mighty soon.)

Little honey baby, keep yo' footses still!—  
(Rocky-bye, oh, rocky, rocky-bye!)  
Hush yo' now, an listen to dat lonesome whip-  
po'-will;  
Don't yo' fix yo' lip an start to cry.

Little honey baby, stop dat winkin' quick!  
(Hear de hoot-owl in de cotton-wood!)  
Yess—I sees yo' eyes adoin' dat dere triflin'  
trick—  
(He gets chillun if dey isn't good.)

Little honey baby, what yo' think yo' see?—  
(Sister keep on climbin' to de sky)—  
Dat's a June bug—it aint got no stinger, lak  
a bee—  
(Reach de glory city by an by.)

Little honey baby, what yo' skeery at?—  
(Go down, Moses—down to Phar-e-oh,)—  
No—dat isn't nuffin but a furry fly-round bat;—  
(Say, he'd betta let dose people go.)

Little honey baby, yo' is all ma own,—  
Deed yo' is.—Yes,—dat's a fia-fly;—  
If I didn't hab yo'—reckon I'd be all alone;  
(Rocky-bye—oh, rocky, rocky-bye.)

Little honey baby, shet yo' eyes up tight;—  
(Shadow man is comin' from de moon,)—  
You's as sweet as roses, if dey *is* so pink and white;  
(Shadow-man 'll get here mighty soon.)

The lines in brackets are supposed to be sung or chanted.  
The Southern "Mammy" seldom sang a song through, but  
interladed it with comments.—V.S.

## THE FAIRY CLOCK

SILVER clock! O silver clock! tell to me the time o' day!

Is there yet a little hour left for us to work and play?

Tell me when the sun will set—tiny globe of silver-grey.

It has been so glad a world since the coming of the morn,

Oft I wondered when I met any souls who seemed forlorn—

And I scarce gave heed to those who were old or travel worn.

Mayhap I have loved too well the merry fleeting things;

Run too lightly with the wind—chased too many shining wings;

Thought too seldom of the night, and the silence that it brings.

Well I fear me I have been but an idler in the sun—

All unfinished are the tasks long and long ago  
begun—

In the dark perchance they weep, who have left  
their work undone.

And I know each black-frocked friar preacheth  
sermons that, alas!

Fain would halt the dancing feet of those care-  
less ones who pass

Down a sweet and primrose path, through the  
ribbons of the grass.

Silver-clock! O Silver-clock! It was only  
yesterday

Dandelions flecked the field, starry bright, and  
gold and gay;

You are but the ghost of one—little globe of  
silver-grey!

Tell me—tell me of the hour—for there is so  
much to do!

Is it early? Is it late? Fairy clock! O tell  
me true,

As I blow you down the wind, out upon a road  
of blue.

## THE SLUMBER ANGEL

WHEN day is ended, and grey twilight flies  
    On silent wings across the tired land,  
The slumber angel cometh from the skies—  
The slumber angel of the peaceful eyes,  
    And with the scarlet poppies in his hand.

His robes are dappled like the moonlit seas,  
    His hair in waves of silver floats afar;  
He weareth lotus-bloom and sweet heartsease,  
With tassels of the rustling green fir trees,  
    As down the dusk he steps from star to star.

Above the world he swings his curfew bell,  
    And sleep falls soft on golden heads and white;  
The daisies curl their leaves beneath his spell,  
The prisoner who wearies in his cell  
    Forgets awhile, and dreams throughout the  
        night.

Even so, in peace, comes that great Lord of rest  
    Who crowneth men with amaranthine flowers;  
Who telleth them the truths they have but  
        guessed,  
Who giveth them the things they love the best,  
    Beyond this restless, rocking world of ours.

## THE LONELY ROAD

WE used to fear the lonely road  
That twisted round the hill;  
It dipped down to the river-way,  
And passed the haunted mill,  
And then crept on, until it reached  
The churchyard, green and still.

No pipers ever took that road,  
No gipsies, brown and gay;  
No shepherds with their gentle flocks,  
No loads of scented hay;  
No market-waggons jingled by  
On any Saturday.

The dog-wood there flung wide its stars,  
In April, silvery sweet;  
The squirrels crossed that path all day  
On tiny flying feet;  
The wild, brown rabbits knew each turn,  
Each shadowy safe retreat.

And there the golden-belted bee  
Sang his sweet summer song,

The crickets chirped there to the moon  
With steady note and strong;  
Till cold and silence wrapped them round  
When autumn nights grew long.

But, oh! they brought the lonely dead  
Along that quiet way,  
With strange procession, dark and slow,  
On sunny days and grey;  
We used to watch them, wonder-eyed,  
Nor care again to play.

And we forgot each merry jest;  
The birds on bush and tree  
Silenced the song within their throats  
And with us watched to see,  
The soft, slow passing out of sight  
Of that dark mystery.

• • • • •  
We fear no more the lonely road  
That winds around the hill;  
Far from the busy world's highway  
And the gods' slow-grinding mill;  
It only seems a peaceful path,  
Pleasant, and green, and still.

## SEA-BORN

AFAR in the turbulent city,  
In a hive where men make gold,  
He stood at his loom from dawn to dark,  
While the passing years were told.

And when he knew it was summer-time  
By the grey dust on the street,  
By the lingering hours of daylight,  
And the sultry noon-tide heat—

Oh! he longed as a captive sea-bird  
To leave his cage and be free,  
For his heart like a shell kept singing  
The old, old song of the sea.

And amid the noise and confusion  
Of wheels that were never still,  
He heard the wind through the scented pines  
On a rough, storm-beaten hill;

While, beyond a maze of painted threads  
Where his tireless shuttle flew,  
In fancy he saw the sunlit waves  
Beckon him out to the blue.

## THE ANGEL

Down the white ward with slow, unswerving  
tread

He came ere break of day—  
A cowl was drawn about his down-bent head,  
His misty robes were grey.

And no man even knew that he went by,  
None saw or heard him pass;  
Softly he moved as clouds drift down the sky,  
Or shadows cross the grass.

Close to a little bed where one lay low,  
At last he took his stand,  
And touched the head that tossed in restless woe  
With gentle, outstretched hand.

“ When bitterness,” he said, “ is at an end,  
And joy grows far and dim,  
I am the angel whom the Lord doth send  
To lead men on to Him.

“ Past the innumerable stars, my friend,  
Past all the winds that blow,  
We, too, must travel to our journey’s end.  
Arise! And let us go!”

“Stay! Stay!” the other cried. “I know thy face!

Death is thy dreaded name!”

“Nay—I am known as ‘Love’ in that far place,”  
He said, “from whence I came.”

But still the other cried, with moan and tear,  
“I fear the dark—and thee!”

“There is no dark,” the angel said, “nor fear,  
For those who go with me.

“There is no loneliness, and nevermore  
The shadow-haunted night,  
When we pass out beyond Life’s swinging door  
The road,” he said, “is bright.”

Then backward slipped the cowl from off his head,  
Downward the robe of grey;  
A radiant presence by the lowly bed  
Greeted the breaking day.

• • • • •

Within the long white ward one lay alone,  
None watched by him awhile,  
But some who passed him said, in whispered tone,  
“See—on his lips—the smile!”

## WHEN CHRISTMAS COMES

FOR thee, my small one—trinkets and new toys,  
The wine of life and all its keenest joys,  
When Christmas comes.

For me, the broken playthings of the past  
That in my folded hands I still hold fast,  
When Christmas comes.

For thee, fair hopes of all that yet may be,  
And tender dreams of sweetest mystery,  
When Christmas comes.

For thee, the future in a golden haze,  
For me, the memory of some bygone days,  
When Christmas comes.

For thee, the things that lightly come and go,  
For thee, the holly and the mistletoe,  
When Christmas comes.

For me, the smiles that are akin to tears,  
For me, the frost and snows of many years,  
When Christmas comes.

## When Christmas Comes 33

For thee, the twinkling candles bright and gay,  
For me, the purple shadows and the grey,  
When Christmas comes.

For thee, the friends that greet thee at the door,  
For me, the faces I shall see no more,  
When Christmas comes.

But ah, for both of us the mystic star  
That leadeth back to Bethlehem afar,  
When Christmas comes.

For both of us the child they saw of old,  
That evermore his mother's arms enfold,  
When Christmas comes.

## THE OPAL MONTH

Now cometh October—a nut-brown maid,  
Who in robes of crimson and gold arrayed  
    Hath taken the king's highway!  
On the world she smiles—but to me it seems  
Her eyes are misty with mid-summer dreams,  
    Or memories of the May.

Opals agleam in the dusk of her hair  
Flash their hearts of fire and colours rare  
    As she dances gaily by—  
Yet she sighs for each empty swinging nest,  
And she tenderly holds against her breast  
    A belated butterfly.

The crickets sing no more to the stars—  
The spiders no more put up silver bars  
    To entangle silken wings;  
But the quail pipes low in the rusted corn,  
And here and there—both at night and at morn—  
    A lonely robin still sings.

A spice-laden breeze of the south is blent  
With perfumed winds from the Orient  
    And they weave o'er her a spell,  
For nun-like she goeth now, still and sweet—  
And while mists like incense curl at her feet,  
    She lingers her beads to tell.

## NOCTURNE

INFOLD us with thy peace, dear moon-lit night,  
And let thy silver silence wrap us round  
Till we forget the city's dazzling light,  
The city's ceaseless sound.

Here where the sand lies white upon the shore,  
And little velvet-fingered breezes blow,  
Dear sea, thy world-old wonder-song once more  
Sing to us e'er we go.

Give us thy garnered sweets, short summer hour:  
Perfume of rose, and balm of sun-steeped pine;  
Scent from the lily's cup and hornèd flower,  
Where bees have drained the wine.

Come, small musicians in the rough sea grass,  
Pipe us the serenade we love the best;  
And winds of midnight, chant for us a mass,  
Our hearts would be at rest.

God of all beauty, though the world is thine,  
Our faith grows often faint, oft hope is spent;  
Show us Thyself in all things fair and fine,  
Teach us the stars' content.

## A SONG OF LOVE

LOVE reckons not by time—its May days of delight

Are swifter than the falling stars that pass beyond our sight.

Love reckons not by time—its moments of despair

Are years that march like prisoners, who drag the chains they wear.

Love counts not by the sun—it hath no night or day—

'Tis only light when love is near—'tis dark with love away.

Love hath no measurements of height, or depth, or space,

But yet within a little grave it oft hath found a place.

Love is its own best law—its wrongs seek no redress;

Love is forgiveness—and it only knoweth how to bless.

## THE UNKNOWING

If the bird knew how through the wintry weather  
An empty nest would swing by day and night,  
It would not weave the strands so close together  
Or sing for such delight.

And if the rosebud dreamed e'er its awaking  
How soon its perfumed leaves would drift apart,  
Perchance 'twould fold them close to still the  
aching  
Within its golden heart.

If the brown brook that hurries through the  
grasses  
Knew of drowned sailors—and of storms to be—  
Methinks 'twould wait a little e'er it passes  
To meet the old grey sea.

If youth could understand the tears and sorrow,  
The sombre days that age and knowledge bring,  
It would not be so eager for the morrow  
Or spendthrift of the spring.

If love but learned how soon life treads its  
measure,  
How short and swift its hours when all is told,  
Each kiss and tender word 'twould count and  
treasure,  
As misers count their gold.

## THE PETITION

SWEET April! from out of the hidden place  
Where you keep your green and gold,  
We pray thee to bring us a gift of grace,  
When the little leaves unfold.

Oh! make us glad with the things that are young;  
Give our hearts the quickened thrills  
That used to answer each robin that sung  
In the days of daffodils.

For what is the worth of all that we gain,  
If we lose the old delight,  
That came in the time of sun and rain,  
When the whole round world seemed right?

It was then we gave, as we went along,  
The faith that to-day we keep;  
And those April days were for mirth and song,  
- While the nights were made for sleep.

Yet, though we follow with steps that are slow  
The feet that dance and that run;  
We would still be friends with the winds that  
blow,  
And companions to the sun!

## HALLOWE'EN

There is an old Italian legend which says that on the eve of the beloved festival of All Saints (Hallowe'en) the souls of the dead return to earth for a little while and go by on the wind. The feast of All Saints is followed by the feast of the dead, when for a day only the sound of the *Miserere* is heard throughout the cities of Italy.

HARK! Hark to the wind! 'Tis the night, they say,

When all souls come back from the far away—  
The dead, forgotten this many a day!

And the dead remembered—ay! long and well—  
And the little children whose spirits dwell  
In God's green garden of asphodel.

Have you reached the country of all content,  
O souls we know, since the day you went  
From this time-worn world, where your years  
were spent?

Would you come back to the sun and the rain,  
The sweetness, the strife, the thing we call pain,  
And then unravel life's tangle again?

I lean to the dark—Hush!—was it a sigh?  
Or the painted vine-leaves that rustled by?  
Or only a night-bird's echoing cry?

## THE GLEANER

As children gather daisies down green ways  
Mid butterflies and bees,  
To-day across the meadows of past days  
I gathered memories.

I stored my heart with harvest of lost hours—  
With blossoms of spent years;  
Leaves that had known the sun of joy, and hours  
Drenched with the rain of tears.

And perfumes that were long ago distilled  
From April's pink and white,  
Again with all their old enchantment, filled  
My spirit with delight.

From out the limbo where lost roses go  
The place we may not see,  
With all its petals sweet and half-ablow,  
One rose returned to me.

Where falls the sunlight chequered by the shade  
On meadows of the past,  
I gathered blossoms that no sun can fade  
No winter wind can blast.

## THE ROVER

THOUGH I follow a trail to north or south,  
Though I travel east or west,  
There's a little house on a quiet road  
That my hidden heart loves best;  
And when my journeys are over and done,  
'Tis there I will go to rest.

The snows have bleached it this many a year;  
The sun has painted it grey;  
The vines hold it close in their clinging arms;  
The shadows creep there to stay;  
And the wind goes calling through empty rooms  
For those who have gone away.

But the roses against the window-pane  
Are the roses I used to know;  
And the rain on the roof still sings the song  
It sang in the long ago,  
When I lay me down to sleep in a bed  
Little and white and low.

It is long since I bid it all good-bye,  
With young light-hearted disdain;

I remember who stood at the door that day:  
    Her tears fell fast as the rain;  
And I whistled a tune and waved my hand,  
    But never went back again.

Toll I have paid at the gates of the world,  
    The sand I know and the sea;  
I have taken the wide and open road,  
    With steps unhindered and free;  
Yet, like a bell ringing down in my heart,  
    My home is calling to me.

## IN SOLITUDE

HE is not desolate whose ship is sailing  
Over the mystery of an unknown sea,  
For some great love with faithfulness unfailing  
Will light the stars to bear him company.

Out in the silence of the mountain passes,  
The heart makes peace and liberty its own—  
The wind that blows across the scented grasses  
Bringing the balm of sleep—comes not alone.

Beneath the vast illimitable spaces  
Where God has set His jewels in array,  
A man may pitch his tent in desert places  
Yet know that heaven is not so far away.

But in the city—in the lighted city—  
Where gilded spires point toward the sky,  
And fluttering rags and hunger ask for pity,  
Grey Loneliness in cloth-of-gold, goes by.

## THE ROBIN

LITTLE brown brother, up in the apple tree,  
High on its blossom-rimmed branches aswing,  
Here where I listen earth-bound, it seems to me  
    You are the voice of the spring.

Herald of Hope to the sad and faint-hearted,  
Piper the gold of the world cannot pay,  
Up from the limbo of things long departed  
    Memories you bring me to-day.

You are the echo of songs that are over,  
You are the promise of songs that will come,  
You know the music, oh, light-winged rover,  
    Sealed in the souls of the dumb.

All of the past that we wearily sigh for,  
All of the future for which our hearts long,  
All Love would live for, and all Love would die  
    for  
Wordless, you weave in a song.

Little brown brother, up in the apple tree,  
My spirit answers each note that you sing,  
And while I listen—earth-bound—it seems to me  
    You are the voice of the spring.

## A SONG OF ROSES

'Tis time to sing of roses: of roses all ablow,

To every vagrant passing breeze they dip a  
courtesy low,

'Tis time to sing of roses! for June is here, you  
know.

One song for true love's roses of sweetest deepest  
red,

Some heart will wear you faithfully when life  
itself hath fled,

And for the white rose sing a song—the white  
rose for the dead.

And ah! the yellow roses, of brightest, lightest  
gold,

King Midas must have touched their leaves in  
mystic days of old,

Or they were made of sunshine, and gilded, fold  
by fold.

And the roadside rose, sweet-briar, we would  
remember thee

And the cinnamon rose that evermore entralls  
each passing bee,  
You old, old-fashioned roses, a-growing wild and  
free.

'Tis time to sing of roses! of roses all ablow!  
They come again, as sweet, my dear, as those  
of long ago.  
'Tis time to sing of roses! for June is here you  
know.

## PRAIRIE

WHERE yesterday rolled long waves of gold  
Beneath the burnished blue of the sky,  
A silver-white sea lies still and cold,  
And a bitter wind blows by.

But nothing passes the door all day,  
Though my watching eyes grow worn and dim,  
Save a lean, grey wolf that swings away  
To the far horizon rim.

Then, one by one, the stars glisten out  
Like frozen tears on a purple pall—  
The darkness folds my cabin about  
And the snow begins to fall.

I will make a hearth-fire red and bright  
And set a light by the window pane  
For one who follows the trail to-night  
That will bring him home again.

Love will ride with him my heart to bless—  
Joy will out-step him across the floor—  
What matters the great white loneliness  
When we bar the cabin door?

## THE CLIMBER

HE stood alone on Fame's high mountain top,  
His hands at rest, his forehead bound with bay;  
And yet he watched with eyes unsatisfied  
The downward winding way.

The great procession of the stars went by  
Far overhead, beyond the mountain's rim,  
But the unconquered worlds of time and space,  
As nothing were to him.

There from his vantage ground, so still and high,  
He watched the storm clouds when they rolled  
below,  
And felt the wind mount up to where he stood  
Amid eternal snow.

And sometimes in the valleys and the plains  
He saw the little children at their play;  
In cottage homes he saw the candle-light  
Gleam out at close of day.

But he and loneliness kept feast and fast,  
The while with weary eyes, by night and day;

They watched the path that led to common  
things—

The downward winding way.

“ ’Twas there,” he said, “ that gladness passed  
me by,

In yonder valley, where I sought the truth;  
And there, a few leagues up the rocky slope,  
I said good-bye to Youth.

“ There, where the pine trees catch the sun’s  
last gold,

Love reached its hands to me and bade me  
stop;

Oh, madness of the ones who climb,” he said,  
“ Up to the mountain top!”

## THE DAISY

An angel found a daisy where it lay  
On Heaven's highroad of transparent gold,  
And, turning to one near, he said, "I pray,  
Tell me what manner of strange bloom I hold.  
You came a long, long way—perchance you know  
In what far country such fair flowers blow?"

Then spoke the other: "Turn thy radiant face  
And gaze with me down purple depth of space.  
See, where the stars lie spilled upon the night,  
Like amber beads that hold a yellow light.  
Note one that burns with faint yet steady glow;  
It is the Earth—and there these blossoms grow.  
Some little child from that dear, distant land  
Hath borne this hither in his dimpled hand."

Still gazed he down. "Ah, friend," he said, "I,  
too,  
Oft crossed the fields at home where daisies grew."

## THE VISION

LONG had she knelt at the Madonna's shrine,  
With the empty chapel, cold and grey,  
Telling her beads, while grief with marring line  
And bitter tear stole all her youth away.

Outcast was she from what Life holdeth dear;  
Banished from joy that other souls might win;  
And from the dark beyond she turned with fear,  
Being so branded by the mark of sin.

Yet when at last she raised her troubled face,  
Haunted by sorrow, whitened by alarms,  
Mary leaned down from out the pictured place,  
And laid the little Christ within her arms.

Rosy and warm she held Him to her heart,  
She—the abandoned one—the thing apart.

## SAINTS

THE Saints of Thy great Church, O Christ,  
How vast their numbers be—  
On holy page and ancient scroll  
Their blessed names we see,  
And from the painted window panes  
They smile eternally.

Rope-girdled monk, and pallid maid,  
And men who for Thy cross  
Fought with the Saracen of old,  
Counting their lives no loss—  
Martyrs who rose through golden flames,  
Free of the body's dross.

Yet there be Saints uncanonised,  
Unrecognised, unknown—  
Here on the common roads of earth,  
Oft times they walk alone;  
Saints whom no soul hath ever praised,  
Saints whom no Church doth own.

Men who against their souls' grim foes  
Wage an unyielding fight;

Men of new creeds, and men of old,  
Men of dark hue, and white;  
Each pressing hard towards some far gleam  
Of Thy celestial light.

Dwellers in places waste and lone,  
Toilers upon the seas—  
Mayhap they seldom pray high heaven  
Softly—on bended knees—  
Yet in the roll-call of Thy Saints,  
Dear Christ—remember these.

## AT MIDNIGHT

TURN Thou the key upon our thoughts, dear Lord,  
And let us sleep;  
Give us our portion of forgetfulness,  
Silent and deep.

Lay Thou Thy quiet hand upon our eyes  
To close their sight;  
Shut out the shining of the moon and stars  
And candle-light.

Keep back the phantoms and the visions sad,  
The shades of grey,  
The fancies that so haunt the little hours  
Before the day.

Quiet the time-worn questions that are all  
Unanswered yet;  
Take from the spent and troubled souls of us  
Their vain regret;

And lead us far into Thy silent land,  
That we may go

Like children out across the field o' dreams  
Where poppies blow.

So all Thy saints—and all Thy sinners too—  
Wilt Thou not keep,  
Since not alone unto Thy well-beloved  
Thou givest sleep?

## NOVEMBER

How like a hooded friar, bent and grey,  
Whose pensive lips speak only when they pray  
Doth sad November pass upon his way.

Through forest aisles while the wind chanteth  
low—

In God's cathedral where the great trees grow,  
Now all day long he paceth to and fro.

When shadows gather and the night-mists rise,  
Up to the hills he lifts his sombre eyes  
To where the last red rose of sunset lies.

A little smile he weareth, wise and cold,  
The smile of one to whom all things are old,  
And life is weary, as a tale twice told.

“Come see,” he seems to say—“where joy has  
fled—  
The leaves that burned but yesterday so red  
Have turned to ashes—and the flowers are dead.

“ The summer’s green and gold hath taken flight,  
October days have gone. Now bleached and  
white

Winter doth come with many a lonely night.

“ And though the people will not heed or stay,  
But pass with careless laughter on their way,  
Even I, with rain of tears, will wait and pray.”

## THE LILY-POND

ON this little pool where the sunbeams lie,  
This tawny gold ring where the shadows die,  
God doth enamel the blue of His sky.

Through the scented dark when the night wind  
    sighs,  
He mirrors His stars where the ripples rise,  
Till they glitter like imprisoned fireflies.

'Tis here that the beryl-green leaves uncurl,  
And here the lilies uplift and unfurl  
Their golden-lined goblets of carven pearl.

When the grey of the eastern sky turns pink,  
Through the silver sedge at the pond's low brink  
The little lone field-mouse creeps down to drink.

And creatures to whom only God is kind,  
The loveless small things, the slow, and the blind,  
Soft steal through the rushes, and comfort find.

Oh, restless the river, restless the sea!  
Where the great ships go, and the dead men be;  
The lily-pond giveth but peace to me.

## LILACS

IN lonely gardens deserted—unseen—

    Oh! lovely lilacs of purple and white,  
You are dipping down through a mist of green  
    For the morning sun's delight.  
And the velvet bee, all belted with black,  
    Drinks deep of the wine which your flagons  
        hold,  
Clings close to your plumes while he fills his pack  
    With a load of burnished gold.

You hide the fences with blossoms of snow,  
    And sweeten the shade of castle towers;  
Over low, grey gables you brightly blow,  
    Like amethysts turned to flowers.

The tramp on the highway—ragged and bold—  
    Wears you close to his heart with jaunty air;  
You rest in my lady's girdle of gold,  
    And are held against her hair.

In God's own acre your tender flowers,  
    Bend down to the grasses and seem to sigh

For those who count time no more by hours—  
Whose summers have all passed by—  
But at eventide the south wind will sing,  
Like a gentle priest who chanteth a prayer;  
And thy purple censers he'll set a-swing,  
To perfume the twilight air.

## APRIL

APRIL! April! April!

With a mist of green on the trees—  
And a scent of the warm brown broken earth  
On every wandering breeze;  
What, though thou be changeful,  
Though thy gold turns to grey again,  
There's a robin out yonder singing,  
Singing in the rain.

April! April! April!

'Tis the Northland hath longed for thee,  
She hath gazed toward the South with aching  
eyes  
Full long and patiently.  
Come now—tell us, sweeting,  
Thou laggard so lovely and late,  
Dost know there's no joy like the joy that comes  
When hearts have learned to wait?

## PAEANS

OH! I will hold fast to Joy!  
I will not let him depart—  
He shall close his beautiful rainbow wings  
And sing his song in my heart.

And I will live with Delight!  
I will know what the children know  
When they dance along with the April wind  
To find where the catkins grow!

I will dream the old, old dreams,  
And look for pixie and fay  
In shadowy woods—and out on the hills—  
As we did but yesterday.

Love I will keep in my soul—  
Ay! even by lock and key!  
There is nothing to fear in all of the world  
If Love will but stay with me.

No, I will not let Faith go!  
I will say with my latest breath—  
I know there's a new and radiant road  
On the other side of Death.

## THE HARP

ACROSS the wind-swept spaces of the sky  
The harp of all the world is hung on high,  
And through its shining strings the swallows fly.

The little silver fingers of the rain  
Oft touch it softly to a low refrain,  
That all day long comes o'er and o'er again.

And when the storms of God above it roll,  
The mighty wind awakes its sleeping soul  
To songs of wild delight or bitter dole.

And through the quiet night, as faint and far  
As melody down-drifted from a star,  
Trembles strange music where those harp-strings  
are.

But only flying words of joy and woe,  
Caught from the restless earth-bound souls below,  
Over the vibrant wires ebb and flow.

And in the cities that men call their own,  
And in the unnamed places, waste and lone,  
This harp forever sounds Life's undertone.

## GULLS

WHEN the mist drives past and the wind blows high,  
And the harbour lights are dim—  
See where they circle, and dip and fly,  
The grey free-lances of wind and sky,  
To the water's distant rim!

Like spirits possessed of a fierce delight,  
A courage that cannot fail,  
They face the breakers—they face the night—  
The mad storm-horses are silvery white,  
They ride through the bitter gale!

They seem like the souls of the long, long lost,  
Who breasted the ocean-main—  
Vikings whose vessels were tempest-tossed,  
Voyagers who sailed, whatever the cost,  
And never came home again.

Or stranger and wilder fancy—it seems  
As I hear their wind-torn cry,  
No birds fly there through the sun's last gleams,  
But the wraiths of hopes—the ghosts of dreams  
That the old sea-gods saw die.

When the mist drives past and the wind blows  
high,  
And the harbour lights are dim—  
See where they circle, and dip and fly,  
The grey free-lances of wind and sky,  
To the far horizon's rim.

## THE SHEPHERD WIND

WHEN hills and plains are powdered white,  
And bitter cold the north wind blows,  
Upon my window in the night  
A fairy-garden grows.

Here poppies that no hand hath sown  
Bloom white as foam upon the sea,  
And elfin bells to earth unknown  
Hold frost-bound melody.

And here are blossoms like to stars  
Tangled in nets of silver lace—  
My very breath their beauty mars,  
Or stirs them from their place.

Perchance the echoes of old songs  
Found here a resting place at last  
With drifting perfume that belongs  
To roses of the past.

Or all the moonbeams that were lost  
On summer nights the world forgets

May here be prisoned by the frost  
With souls of violets.

The wind doth shepherd many things—  
And when the nights are long and cold,  
Who knows how strange a flock he brings  
All safely to the fold.

## THE TEMPLE

ENTER the temple beautiful! The house not  
made with hands!

Rain-washed and green, wind-swept and clean,  
Beneath the blue it stands,  
And no cathedral anywhere  
Seemeth so holy or so fair.

It hath no heavy gabled roof, no door with lock  
and key,

No window-bars shut out the stars,  
The aisles are wide and free—  
Here through the night each altar-light  
Is but a moon-beam, silver-white.

Silently as the temple grew at Solomon's  
command,

Still as things seem within a dream  
This rose from out the land:  
And all the pillars, grey and high,  
Lifted their arches to the sky.

Here is the perfume of the leaves, the incense of  
the pines—

The magic scent that hath been pent  
Within the tangled vines:  
No censor filled with spices rare  
E'er swung such sweetness on the air.

And all the golden gloom of it holdeth no haunt-  
ing fear,

For it is blessed, and giveth rest  
To those who enter here—

Here in the evening—who can know  
But God Himself walks to and fro!

And music past all mastering within the chancel  
rings;

None could desire a sweeter choir  
Than this—that soars and sings,  
Till far the scented shadows creep—  
And quiet darkness bringeth sleep.

## REQUEST

(To E. M.)

SING me a song—a song to ease old sorrows,  
And dull the edge of care—  
A song of Hope to ring through all the morrows  
That be my share.

Unlock the doors where joy hath been in hiding,  
Though barred they be and strong,  
And send black grief far down the wind a-riding—  
Sing me a song.

Sing thou thy sky-lark song of sweetest daring,  
And April ecstasy,  
That I may follow it and go a-faring  
To Arcady.

Charm sleep from out the shadows with thy  
singing,  
And when the light turns grey,  
Leave me bright dreams until the dawn comes  
bringing  
The rose-edged day.

The wind of March taught thee his springtime  
madness,

And then in undertone  
Whispered the wonder-secret of his gladness  
To thee alone.

And thou hast learned from little brook and river  
Their tender melody—  
The notes that set the thrush's throat a-quiver  
Are known to thee.

Sing me a song—a song to ease old sorrows,  
And dull the edge of care—  
A song of Hope, to ring through all the morrows  
That be my share.

## A SONG

O HEART of mine—if I were but a swallow—  
A thing so fearless, swift of flight, and free—  
On wings unwearied I would find and follow  
Some path that led to thee!

Were I a rose out in the garden growing  
My sweetness I would give the vagrant breeze—  
For he, perchance, might meet thee all un-  
knowing—  
Yet bring thee memories.

## THE TOAST

A TOAST to thee, O dear old year,  
While the last moments fly,  
A toast to thy sweet memory—  
We'll lift the glasses high,  
And bid to thee a fond farewell  
As thou art passing by!

A toast to those who reaped success  
In this good year of grace;  
A toast to every one of them—  
Come! Give the victors place!  
Come, wish them well with right good will—  
The winners in the race!

And one toast more! To those who failed  
Wherever they may be;—  
With faces white they fought the fight,  
But missed the victory;  
So here's to them—the ones who strove—  
On land and on the sea!

Fair dreams to thee, O grey old year,  
Thy working time is done,  
And gone for thee the silver moon,  
And golden noon-day sun;  
Yet sad old year—and glad old year—  
We'll know no better one.

## THE SEA-SHELL

Oh, fairy palace of pink and pearl  
Frescoed with filigree silver-white,  
Down in the silence beneath the sea  
God by Himself must have fashioned thee  
Just for His own delight!

But no!—For a dumb and shapeless thing  
Stirring in darkness its little hour,  
Thy walls were built with infinite care,  
Thou sea-scented home, so fine and fair,  
Perfect—and like a flower!

## AT DAWN

TURN to thy window in the silver hour  
That day comes stepping down the hills of  
night,  
Infolded as the leaves infold a flower  
By all her rose-leaf robes of misty light.

Then, like a joy born out of blackest sorrow,  
The miracle of morning seems to say,  
“ There is no night without its dear to-morrow,  
No lonely dark that does not find the day.”

## THE WHISTLER

THROUGHOUT the sunny day he whistled on his way—

Oh high and low, and gay and sweet,  
The melody rang down the street,  
Till all the weary, old, and grey,  
Smiled at their work, or stopped to say,  
“ Now God be thanked that youth is fair,  
And light of heart, and free from care.”

What time the wind blew high, he whistled and went by—

Then clarion clear on every side  
The song was scattered far and wide;  
Like birds above a storm that fly  
The silver notes soared to the sky,  
“ O soul, whose courage does not fail  
But with a song can meet the gale.”

And when the rain fell fast, he whistled as he passed—

A little tune the whole world knew,  
A song of love, of love most true;

On through the mist it came at last  
To one by sorrow overcast,  
“ Dear Christ,” she said, “ by night and day  
They serve who praise, as well as pray.”

Though the great world was white, he whistled  
in the night—  
The sky was spangled all with gold,  
The bitter wind was keen and cold,  
Yet, gay musician, out of sight,  
You still put wintry thoughts to flight,  
For summer follows where you fare,  
O Whistler, so debonair.”

And when the fog hung grey, he whistled on his  
way—  
The little children in his train  
With rosy lips caught up the strain.  
Then I, to hear what he might say,  
Followed with them, that sombre day.  
“ Is it for joy of life,” quoth I,  
“ Good sir, you go awhistling by ? ”  
He smiled, and sighed, and shook his head,  
“ I cheer my own sad heart,” he said.

## COMMON-WEALTH

GIVE thanks, my soul, for the things that are free!  
The blue of the sky, the shade of a tree,  
And the unowned leagues of the shining sea.

Be grateful, my heart, for everyman's gold;  
By road-way and river and hill unfold  
Sun-coloured blossoms that never are sold.

For the little joys sometimes say a grace;  
The scent of a rose, the frost's fairy lace,  
Or the sound of the rain in a quiet place.

Be glad of what cannot be bought or beguiled;  
The trust of the tameless, the fearless, the wild,  
The song of a bird and the faith of a child.

For prairie and mountain, windswept and high,  
For betiding beauty of earth and sky—  
Say a benediction e'er you pass by.

Give thanks, my soul, for the things that are free!  
The joy of life and the spring's ecstasy,  
The dreams that have been and the dreams that  
will be.

## DON CUPID

Oh! little pink and white god of love,  
With your tender smiling mouth,  
And eyes as blue as the blue above,  
Afar in the sunny south.

No army e'er laid so many low  
Or wounded so many hearts,  
No mighty gunner e'er wrought such woe  
As you with your feathered darts.

## HEAVEN

Not with the haloed saints would Heaven be  
For such as I;  
Who have not reached to their serenity  
So sweet and high.

Not with the martyrs washed by holy flame  
Could I find place,  
For they are victors who through glory came  
To see God's face.

Not with the perfect souls that enter there  
Could mine abide,  
For clouded eyes from eyes all cloudless fair  
'Twere best to hide.

And not for me the wondrous streets of gold  
Or crystal sea—  
I only know the brown earth, worn and old,  
Where sinners be.

Unless I found those who to me belong,  
My dear and own,

I, in the vastness of that shining throng,  
Would be alone.

God guide us to some sun-blessed little star,  
We ask not where,  
Nor whether it be near or it be far,  
So Love is there.

## SIR HENRY IRVING

“Thou trumpet made for Shakespeare’s lips to blow!”

No more for thee the music and the lights,  
Thy magic may no more win smile nor frown;  
For thee, O dear interpreter of dreams,  
The curtain hath rung down.

No more the sea of faces, turned to thine,  
Swayed by impassioned word and breathless  
pause;  
No more the triumph of thine art—no more  
The thunder of applause.

No more for thee the maddening, mystic bells,  
The haunting horror—and the falling snow;  
No more of Shylock’s fury, and no more  
The Prince of Denmark’s woe.

Not once again the fret of heart and soul,  
The loneliness and passion of King Lear;  
No more bewilderment and broken words  
Of wild despair and fear.

And never wilt thou conjure from the past  
The dread and bitter field of Waterloo;

Thy trembling hands will never pluck again  
Its roses or its rue.

Thou art no longer player to the court;  
No longer red-robed cardinal or king;  
To-day thou art thyself—the Well-Beloved—  
Bereft of crown and ring.

Thy feet have found the path that Shakespeare  
found,  
Life's lonely exit of such far renown;  
For thee, O dear interpreter of dreams,  
The curtain hath rung down.

*October, 1905.*

## JEAN DE BREBŒUF

Jean de Brebœuf, a priest of the Jesuit Order, came to Canada as a missionary to the Indians about the year 1625. He belonged to an old and honourable French family that had given many sons to the army, and was a man of great physical strength, one who possessed an iron will, that was yet combined with sweetness and gentleness of temper.

He lived with the Indians for many years, and spoke the dialects of different tribes, though his mission was chiefly to the Hurons. By them he was much beloved.

At the time of the uprising of the Iroquois in 1649, there was a massacre of the Hurons at the little mission village of St. Louis upon the shores of Georgian Bay. There Jean de Brebœuf, refusing to leave his people, met death by torture at the hands of the conquering Iroquois. Lalement, his friend, a priest of the same order, was also martyred by these Indians upon the same day, March 16th, 1649.

As Jean de Brebœuf told his rosary

At sundown in his cell, there came a call!—  
Clear as a bell rung on a ship at sea,  
Breaking the beauty of tranquillity—  
Down from the heart of Heaven it seemed to fall:

“ Hail, Jean de Brebœuf! Lift thee to thy feet!  
Not, for thy sins, by prayer shalt thou atone;  
Thou wert not made for peace so deeply sweet,  
Thine be the midnight cold, the noonday heat,  
The journey through the wilderness, alone.

“ Too well thou lovest France—her very air  
Is wine against thy lips—and all her weeds  
Are in thine eyes as flowers. She is fair  
In all her moods to thee—and even there,  
See! thou dost dream of her above thy beads.

“ Rouse thee from out thy dreams! Awake!  
Awake!

Thou priest who cometh of a martial line!—  
Thou hast its strength, thy will no man can  
break:

Go forth unarmed, the law of love to take  
Into a lonely land, that yet is Mine.”

Then straightway fell the monk upon his face  
Trembling with awe throughout his mighty  
frame.

“ I hear Thee, Lord! ” he cried. “ Give me Thy  
grace,  
That I may follow thee to any place,  
And speak to any people—in Thy name.”

The vine-leaf shadows darkened in the cell—  
And barefoot friars passed the close-shut door;  
At vespers rang the monastery bell,  
Yet still he lay, unheeding, where he fell,  
A cross of black outstretched upon the floor.

•      •      •      •      •

Northward into the silence, night and day,  
Through the unknown, with faith that did not  
fail,  
Into the lands beneath the redman's sway,  
The priest called Jean de Brebœuf took his  
way,  
Led by the Polestar and the far-blazed trail.

He bore the sacred wine cups, and a bell  
Of beaten bronze, whose tongue should warn or  
bless;  
As had been done in France, so he as well  
Would ring a marriage chime or funeral knell  
For his lone flock, out in the wilderness.

And like a phantom ever at his side  
Pointing each hour to paths he scarce could see,  
By wood and waterway, went one still guide,  
Who drifted with the shades, when daylight  
died,  
Into the deep of night, and mystery.

But when they reached the place of many pines,  
God's country, that no white man yet had  
named—

They beached their birch canoe 'neath swinging  
vines,

For here, the Indian read by many signs,  
Lay the wild land the tribe of Huron claimed.

Then like down-dropping pearls the rounded  
years,

One after one, slipped off the thread of Time,  
And Jean de Brebœuf laboured—oft with fears  
Safe-hidden, oftener still with smiles and tears,  
Among the people of this northern clime.

The forest children had become a part  
Of his own life—always he spoke their tongue,  
He dwelt within their tents—with all his heart  
He learned their ancient woodcraft, and each  
art

Their race had practised when the world was  
young.

He gave a simple truth and faithfulness  
To men of silence and of subtle ways;  
He shared with them long hunger and distress—  
When they had little, he himself had less,  
Through all the dark and lonely winter days.

High in the vast cathedral of the trees  
He hung the bell of bronze; there in God's  
name  
He taught the law of Love; there on his knees  
In the sun-dappled gloom, midst birds and  
bees,  
He lifted up the cross, with words of flame.

But evil days were come. The arrowhead  
Was dipped in poison, and de Brebœuf saw  
The painted faces and the swift-slain dead,—  
The deep, unhealing wound—the rent of red  
Made by the weapon of the Iroquois.

Closed in the village with its palisade,  
Guarded by many a mighty Huron brave,  
The women and the little children stayed,  
Lest forest fire or sweeping midnight raid  
Make all their hunting ground a common grave.

It was at daybreak that they heard the cry:  
“ The Iroquois!—The Iroquois! They come!  
Fly to the hidden forest places! Fly!—  
To linger in the village is to die—  
Steal through the river grasses—and be dumb! ”

Swiftly the women and the children fled,  
But with the braves de Brebœuf stayed behind.  
“Go!” cried the chief, “good father—we be  
dead!”  
Yet soft he answered as he shook his head:  
“I stay with thee—and with thy old and blind.”

. . . . .

When the red sun came creeping up the sky  
Grey death had reaped the harvest hate had  
sown;  
The Jesuit heard no longer curse or sigh—  
His prayers were said for those about to die—  
He faced the living Iroquois alone.

They bound him fast beneath the forest green,  
And when was come the shadowy edge of night—  
Nay—ask not what the horned owl hath seen,  
Nor what the moon doth know—white and  
serene  
The soul of Jean de Brebœuf took its flight.

## IN EGYPT

*It was the Angel Azrael the Lord God sent below  
At midnight, into every house in Egypt, long ago—  
O long, and long ago.*

ALL day the wife of Pharaoh had paced the  
palace hall

Or the long white pillared court that was open  
to the sky;

A passion of wild restlessness ensnared her in its  
thrall

While she fought a fear within her—a thing  
that would not die.

She had sent away her maidens—their weeping  
vexed her ears—

Their pallid faces filled her with impatient  
pitying scorn;—

But she kept one time-worn woman, who long  
had outgrown fears,

The old brown nurse who held her son the day  
that he was born.

The mighty gods had failed her—the river-gods  
and the sun,  
And the little gods of brass and stone—who  
stared but made no sign,  
So she pled with them no longer, her prayers were  
said and done,  
And now she neither bowed her head, or knelt  
at any shrine.

Her hair was blown upon the wind like wreathes  
of golden flame,  
And the sea-blue of her eyes cast blue shadows  
on her face,  
For she was not of Egypt—but unto the king  
she came  
A captive—yet a princess—from a northern  
sea-bound place.

She watched the fiery wheel roll down behind  
the level land,  
One small hand curled above her eyes, and  
one above her heart,  
But when the ruby afterglow crept up and  
stained the sand  
She turned and gazed toward Goshen, where  
Israel dwelt apart.

. . . . .

Nine plagues had wasted Egypt with their  
tortures grim and slow;  
The earth was desolated, and scarred by hail  
and fire;  
Still even yet her Lord refused to let his bonds-  
men go  
To worship in the wilderness, the God of their  
desire.

The yellow Nile had turned to blood before her  
watching eyes—  
It was branded into memory—a haunting  
death-strewn sight;—  
The very dust upon the street the rod had made  
to rise  
In a living moving horror, of atoms, leprous-  
white.

The frogs had come as things bewitched; an army  
without fear  
They had broken through the rushes their  
upward way to take;  
And each one followed steadily a voice no man  
could hear—  
While poisoned wind and pestilence came  
swiftly in their wake.

Then oh, the little flies that swarmed from out  
the earth and air!

And the murrain of the camels, and cattle in  
the field!

She prayed the king for love of her to hear the  
people's prayer

And send the slaves far hither;—but for love  
he would not yield.

His face was like the carven face upon the basalt  
door;—

Her beauty could not charm him, her voice  
had lost its power;

So she wrapped a veil about her and entreated  
him no more

But sat alone and watched, from out her  
window in the tower.

She saw the Hebrew leader with uncovered silvery  
hair

Come with the priest at daybreak to the outer  
palace gate,

And the rod of woe and wonder they carried with  
them there,—

Yet Pharaoh bid them enter—for he dared  
not bid them wait.

But naught prevailed, for sore disease had  
scourged the low and high,  
And the hail of God had fallen and crushed  
the growing grain,  
And a fire no hand had kindled in searing wrath  
swept by—  
Such fire as none had seen before—as none  
would see again.

Then came the pirate locusts, with a sea-song  
free and bold;—  
The spent and broken people lacked the  
strength to force them back,  
But watched them take the last green blades  
that never would be gold—  
And shut their doors against the foe that  
turned the meadows black.

Then Pharaoh wavered—more—he called the  
Hebrews in his haste  
Imploring respite—pleading his repentance  
bitterly—  
For there was death on every side, and all the  
land was waste;—  
So the western wind of God blew the locusts  
out to sea.

Yet not enough. Once more the king denied  
his given word;  
He dared the wrath of Heaven, and he made  
his heart as steel;  
Then all the lights of God went out, and no man  
even stirred—  
But stayed companioned by his fear, in dark-  
ness he could feel.

So had each dreadful day gone by, each slow  
departing night,  
And the queen stood now at sunset alone with  
grief and shame,  
When one came running towards her through  
the failing crimson light,  
A little lad, with Egypt's eyes—but hair like  
golden flame.

“Thou has been long, Beloved!” she cried, and  
frowned all tenderly,  
“Indeed I have not seen thee since the burning  
noon took wing.”  
“Mother of mine,” he answered, “I have been  
where I should be  
These burdened times of Egypt—beside my  
Lord the King.

“ ’Twill take the country many days to gain its  
old time peace,  
But thou shalt suffer nothing;—I, myself, will  
care for thee  
And see that naught doth harm thee—until all  
these troubles cease;—  
These sad and magic doings that no man can  
solve,” said he.

“ Ay! That thou wilt,” she said. “ But tell me,  
how doth fare the king?  
Doth he relent? Or is his face forbidding—  
dark and cold?—  
Or hath he sent thee hither but some word of me  
to bring  
As he cannot leave the council, and now the  
day grows old? ”

He shook his head. “ I came because I longed  
to see thee so;—  
And Pharaoh reads the chart of stars while  
time goes creeping by,  
Or he sits in weary silence—or paceth to and fro.  
Since he banished the magicians, all fear him  
—all save I.

“Put on thy golden girdle with the mighty  
emerald clasp  
And thy lotus broidered robe. Braid thy hair  
all cunningly,  
And wear the winged head-dress with the tur-  
quois jewelled asp—  
Then come and coax him from his gloom.—  
Thou only canst,” said he.

“Wise counsellor!” she smiled; “Nay, but too  
wise for thy short years,  
I will unto the king;—and such great issues  
are at stake  
This time I dare not fail. I must go queenly—  
without tears  
Or humble supplications—but as one no woe  
can break.

“Stay thou with thy old nurse, Beloved—she  
sitteth in the hall—  
And she will tell thee wondrous tales, to win  
from thee a smile,  
Then take thy supper by her side, and when deep  
night doth fall,  
Go to the tower, whence I’ll come, but in a  
little while.”

Arrayed in her most lovely robes she took her  
stately way

By courtiers unattended, through the palace  
vast and still.

Her beauty was a thing to hold all bitterness at  
bay,

To move the hearts of men, and bend their  
spirits to her will!

She passed beneath the rose red lights that hung  
from roof and door,

And by unseeing gods, where curled an incense,  
blue and sweet;

As one who walks in sleep she crossed the cool  
mosaic floor,

That echoed to the music of her little sandalled  
feet.

She reached the council chamber and there  
entered silently;—

But though the bowing wise men had been  
reeds the wind could sway

Would have noted them as little. She only  
seemed to see

One face, inscrutable and dark, toward which  
she took her way.

The king sat still as Fate. "Most High," she said, "I come for truth  
Of this new threat of vengeance. There is  
horror in the air;—  
The Ethiopian runner hath brought word to me  
in sooth  
Blood is sprinkled on the door-posts of the  
Hebrews everywhere!"

"There are rumours—so he sayeth—of an Angel  
who will slay  
The first-born sons of Egypt—should these  
bondsmen not depart.  
Thy people weep in anguish—I myself must hear  
thee say—  
The Hebrew leader threatens no such danger  
to my heart—

"He is my heart—my inner heart;—O straight  
he is and strong!  
To me he meaneth Egypt—Egypt meaneth  
but my son—  
So I would take him swiftly toward the land  
where I belong  
To return to thee in safety when these troubles  
all are done."

“ The streets are filled with mourners;—every day more tears are shed;  
The embalmers have grown weary—they will not work for gold—  
And everywhere the eye doth see processions of the dead,  
Till they seem but mocking phantoms, we watch unmoved and cold.”

“ Thou wilt not let the Hebrews go—I read it in thine eyes—  
There are no gods in Egypt—there is nothing but thy Will—  
That sets itself against some force that yet in strength will rise  
But to silence all thine answers and bid thy voice be still.”

Then Pharaoh leaned down toward her: “ O most beautiful!” he said,  
“ There is not a man who liveth dare say so to my face;  
And truly were there such a one ’twere better he were dead,  
For dead men suffer nothing.—Yet I pray thee of thy grace

“Have patience now to hear me. 'Tis as the  
Ethiope heard.

They threatened all the first-born;—but the  
tower is brass and stone;

There my son shall stay to-night, guarded well,  
I give thee word.—

Where armies could not enter—can one angel  
pass alone?

“Thinkst thou that I am one to be affrighted  
by the dark?

A weakling to be played upon—a coward or  
a fool?

Nay!—I defy the Israelites!—Their weapons  
miss their mark,

They have roused my utmost anger: it taketh  
long to cool.

“But thou!” he said; “but thou! Methinks  
had they but threatened thee  
I should perchance have known the very  
quality of fear;—

Thou thing of perfect loveliness! Content mine  
eyes will be

Though in the land of Egypt is no blossom for  
a year.

“ But thou art queen, and thou art free;—free  
now to go or stay,  
I would not bind thee to my side—not by one  
golden hair.—  
Leave thou this land of peril e'er the breaking  
of the day,  
Or give thy life to my dark life—and bear  
what it doth bear.”

Then blanched her face to whiteness of the lilies  
on her gown,  
And low she bowed as lilies bow in drift of  
wind and rain;  
“ My Lord,” she said, “ I have no will except to  
lay it down  
At thy desire. As I have done, so will I do  
again.

“ Thou art my king; my son is thine. It is not  
mine to say  
That I will bear him hence.—Yet gropes my  
soul unto a light;  
The quarrel is 'twixt Heaven and thee alone—  
so I will stay  
With him I love within the tower throughout  
this fateful night.”

“ And if the Angel cometh through the walls of  
stone and brass—  
And if he toucheth Egypt’s son, to seal his  
gentle breath,  
Then will we know that God is God, He who  
hath right to pass  
Our little doors, for He Himself is Lord of  
Life and Death.”

• • • • •

O when the desert blossomed like a mystic silver  
rose,  
And the moon shone on the palace, deep  
guarded to the gate,  
And softly touched the lowly homes fast barred  
against their foes,  
And lit the faces hewn of stone, that seemed to  
watch and wait—

There came a cry—a rending cry—upon the  
quivering air,  
The sudden wild lamenting of a nation in its  
pain,  
For the first-born sons of Egypt, the young, the  
strong, the fair—  
Had fallen into dreamless sleep—and would  
not wake again.

And within the palace tower the little prince  
slept well,  
His head upon his mother's heart, that knew  
no more alarms;  
For at the midnight hour—O most sweet and  
strange to tell—  
She too slept deeply as the child close folded  
in her arms.

. . . . .

Hard through the city rode the king, unarmed,  
unhelmeted,  
Toward the land he loaned his bondsmen, the  
country kept in peace;  
He swayed upon his saddle, and he looked as  
looked the dead—  
The people stared and wondered though their  
weeping did not cease.

On did he ride to Goshen, and he called “Arise!  
Arise!  
Thou leader of the Israelites, 'tis I who bid  
you go!  
Take thou these people hence, before the sun hath  
lit the skies;—  
Get thee beyond the border of this land of  
death and woe!”

Across the plains of Egypt through the shadows  
of the night  
Came the sound as of an army moving onward  
steadily,  
And their leader read his way by the stars'  
eternal light  
While all the legions followed on their journey  
to the sea.

. . . . .

The moon that shineth overhead once saw these  
mysteries—  
And then the world was young, that hath these  
many years been old;  
If Egypt drank her bitter cup down even to the  
lees  
Who careth now? 'Tis but an ancient tale  
that hath been told.

*Yet still we hear the footsteps—as he goeth to and  
fro—  
Of Azrael, the Angel, that the Lord God sent below,  
To Egypt—long ago.*

## A SONG OF POPPIES

I LOVE red poppies! Imperial red poppies!  
Sun-worshippers are they;  
Gladly as trees live through a hundred summers  
They live one little day.

I love red poppies! Impassioned scarlet poppies!  
Ever their strange perfume  
Seems like an essence brewed by fairy people  
From an immortal bloom.

I love red poppies! Red, silken, swaying poppies!  
Deep in their hearts they keep  
A magic cure for woe—a draught of Lethe—  
A lotus-gift of sleep.

I love red poppies! Soft silver-stemmed, red  
poppies,  
That from the rain and sun  
Gather a balm to heal some earth-born sorrow,  
When their glad day is done.

## A PAGAN PRAYER

LORD of all Life! When my hours are done,  
Take me and make me anew—  
And give me back to the earth and the sun,  
And the sky's unlimited blue.

The nightingale sings in an ecstasy  
To the moonlit April night,  
But my songs are locked in the heart of me,  
Like birds that may not take flight.

The little purple-winged swallows that fly  
Through waves of the upper air,  
Have a sweeter liberty, Lord, than I,  
Who may not follow them there.

Pavilions of sunshine—tents of the rain,  
For these, the wild and the free;  
And for us walled garden and window-pane,  
And bolt and staple and key.

We are worn with wisdom that never brings  
Peace to the world and its woe—  
For a space with Thy joyous lesser things,  
Teach me the faith I would know.

### A LOVE SONG

Oh haste, my Sweet! Impatient now I wait,  
The crescent moon swings low, it groweth late,  
A night bird sings, of Life, and Love, and Fate!

Oh haste, my Sweet! Youth and its gladness  
goes,  
Joy hath one summer time, like to the rose,  
Love only lives through all the winter snows.

Then haste, my Sweet! These hours are all our  
own,  
And see! A rose leaf on the night breeze blown!  
For thee I wait—for thee I wait alone!

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